

EYES ONLY

May 28, 1959

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Discussion at the 408th Meeting
of the National Security Council,
Thursday, May 28, 1959

Present at the 408th NSC Meeting were the President of the United States, presiding for Items 1 and 2; Mr. C. Douglas Dillon for the Secretary of State; the Secretary of Defense; and the Director, Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization. Also attending the meeting and participating in the Council actions below were Mr. Fred C. Scribner, Jr., for the Secretary of the Treasury; the Director, Bureau of the Budget; and the Secretary of Commerce (Items 1 and 2). Also attending the meeting were the Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission; the Director, U.S. Information Agency; the Director of Central Intelligence; General Maxwell D. Taylor for the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; the U.S. Representative to NATO (W. Randolph Burgess); the Assistant to the President; the Special Assistants to the President for National Security Affairs, for Science and Technology, and for Security Operations Coordination; Assistant Secretary of Defense John N. Irwin, II; Mr. Howard Furnas, Department of State; the White House Staff Secretary; the Assistant White House Staff Secretary; the Executive Secretary, NSC, and the Deputy Executive Secretary, NSC.

There follows a summary of the discussion at the meeting and the main points taken.

1. SIGNIFICANT WORLD DEVELOPMENTS AFFECTING U.S. SECURITY

The Director of Central Intelligence commented initially on events in Iraq. These he described as having been somewhat more favorable in the course of the last week although it was still too early to detect any clear trend. Qasim seemed to be taking a reasonably firm stand against the Communists and there had been certain cautious gestures favorable to the West. On the other hand, Qasim was still non-committal in his reactions to gestures by the U.S. in support of his regime.

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TOP SECRET

prepared by the NSC Planning Board and transmitted by the reference memorandum of May 22, 1959.

- c. Noted that the NSC Planning Board would review and prepare a report on U.S. policy toward South Asia (to supersede NSC 5701), taking into account the OCB Report and the discussion at this meeting.

3. THE GENEVA CONFERENCE
(NSC Action No. 2089)

Secretary McElroy said that his report could be very brief in view of the lateness of the hour. He said that no progress of a substantial nature had yet been made at the Geneva Foreign Ministers' Conference. What had been revealed there were two quite completely opposed positions and Secretary McElroy briefly summarized the Western and the Soviet positions thus far taken. Continuing, Secretary McElroy said that the precise stage of development of the Conference was that both these two positions had been thoroughly ventilated at the Plenary Sessions of the Foreign Ministers. He predicted that the Plenary Sessions would henceforth become rather intermittent and that there would be more private dinners and meetings. Moreover, there would be some six hours, beginning this afternoon in the airplane which was taking the Foreign Ministers back to Geneva. These hours may reveal something of Soviet intentions thus far most successfully hidden.

Mr. Gray asked if there was any danger that at the Foreign Ministers' Conference, the question of the number of on-site inspections for nuclear explosions would be posed in a political context rather than being posed in a scientific context. Secretary McElroy replied that the Russians would certainly like us to concur on the basis of an agreement in principle but that the Western Powers certainly would not fall for this. Secretary Irwin added that Gromyko had already failed to secure agreement that the number of on-site inspections was a political question but he added that the Russians had also refused to discuss this issue in its technical and scientific context except in the case of high altitude tests.

Mr. McCone warned of the likelihood that Congress would insist that any test suspension agreement with the Soviet Union be closely geared to scientific rather than political criteria. Secretary McElroy agreed with him and said that Congress was not likely to agree to a treaty for test suspension on any other basis.

The National Security Council:

Noted and discussed an oral report by the Secretary of Defense, in the absence of and on behalf of the Secretary of State, on the Geneva Conference.

4. The following matters were discussed at the meeting of the National Security Council although they were not on the agenda and have not been included in the formal Record of Actions of this Council meeting.

The President announced that he had just received news of a successful flight of a JUPITER missile which contained live monkeys and that these monkeys had been recovered still alive at the conclusion of the flight.

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The President before leaving the Council meeting to join with the Foreign Ministers said that he had one important question he wished to put to the "Defense Department people." He said that he was increasingly upset by the vehemence of the fight between the advocates of the NIKE missile and the advocates of the BOMARC. Why, asked the President, do we have to have two armed services of the U.S. shooting two different ground-to-air missiles? This is not a question which has been neglected in the past. Former Secretary of Defense Wilson had said that we had gone so far down the road in procurement of these two kinds of missiles that we would have to leave the matter up to the Services. This did not mean to him, said the President, that each of two Services must have its own special ground-to-air missile. Moreover, if the two Services insist on using and firing two different kinds of ground-to-air missiles, it seemed to the President that we were violating all that this Administration had ever said about integrated control in the armed Services.

The President added that in any case he would certainly like to see a memorandum of the reasons why we must continue along the line that we seem wedded to. Secretary McElroy replied that he had given much thought to this problem since he had come back from Geneva.

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The President said that he had one other thing which very greatly disturbed him. This, he said, was the obvious lessening of what he called the authority of the corporate conclusions of the Military Services. This tendency seemed to the President very destructive of the respect due to the opinions of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Secretary McElroy replied that what we were faced with in this particular matter was how to manage Congressional hearings which played up differences. This problem had to be straightened out if the tendency which disturbed the President so greatly was to be avoided in the future.

The President replied that he doubted the possibility of getting the committees of Congress to change their ways if they could see a partisan advantage in continuing along the present line. To this Secretary McElroy answered that if the President were right, we could only have recourse to insisting that military people testifying before Congress keep their mouths shut when asked for an expression of their private opinions. We would of course take a heavy rap if we were to undertake to do this.

The President insisted that in his view every military man should support the final decision of those in positions of authority after he has had the opportunity to state his own personal views. Such a procedure as this was the essential basis on which a military staff successfully operated. Suppose, asked the President, we were actually in a state of war and all these differences of opinion and challenges to authority were being aired?

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At this point the President actually left the meeting. Subsequently and after the conclusion of the discussion on South Asia, Mr. Gray brought before the members of the Council the suggestion by the President and the Vice President, made at last week's Council meeting, with respect to the wisdom of inviting some thousands of Russian students and a selected number of members of the Russian "managerial class" to visit the U.S. in the course of a year. Mr. Gray indicated that he had planned to propose the creation of a committee of Council members headed by the Vice President to advise the President on the wisdom of this proposal. Mr. Gray reminded the members of the Council that the President has specifically insisted that he did not want an elaborate staff operation to decide this question but instead wanted the opinions of his principal advisers. Moreover, continued Mr. Gray, he had specifically asked the President whether the President had been correct in stating at last week's Council meeting that Mr. J. Edgar Hoover had supported the

President's suggestion for bringing over the Russian students when the President had made this suggestion a couple of years ago. The President had replied that Mr. Hoover had indeed supported this proposal. Mr. George Allen corroborated this fact as a result of a question which he had himself put to Mr. Hoover.

Mr. Gray then said that he felt that the members of the Council had an obligation to provide an expression of their own opinions to the President. Accordingly, he invited the members of the Council to think this matter over as individuals and to report their views to the President at a later meeting of the National Security Council.

Mr. Stans suggested that each member of the National Security Council should provide Mr. Gray with his views on this matter which Mr. Gray could then transmit to the President. Mr. Gray said he thought well of Mr. Stans' suggestion.

Mr. Allen Dulles wondered whether consideration could be given to this problem at a luncheon meeting of the Operations Coordinating Board. Secretary Dillon said that the State Department was already hard at work on determining their view of this problem. Secretary Dillon also noted that the President might feel the need to be able to make a dramatic move at a Summit Conference if such a conference were to follow the present meeting of the Foreign Ministers. Secretary Dillon felt reasonably sure that the President was thinking about his suggestion for inviting the Russian students in the context of a possible announcement at a Summit Conference.

Secretary McElroy suggested the desirability that the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare would have useful views on the practicality of the President's suggestion. Mr. Gray replied that he agreed that Secretary Flemming would have to be brought into the act but again warned that the President did not wish anyone to undertake a big staff study of his proposal and therefore had invited each member of the Council to think the matter over, consult privately, and give him their views. Secretary Dillon lastly indicated, in response to an inquiry as to what the President was now engaged in saying to the four Foreign Ministers elsewhere in the White House, that the President's remarks would be confined to generalities and an insistence on the necessity of finding means to ensure the peace and also the necessity for the Foreign Ministers to recede from rigid and completely opposed positions at Geneva.

Everett Gleason

S. EVERETT GLEASON